

THE
EXPLANATION;

OR,

AGREEABLE SURPRISE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By a YOUNG LADY.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

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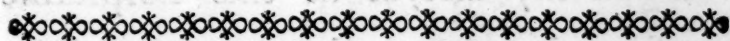
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THE
EXPLANATION;
OR,

AGREEABLE SURPRISE.



LETTER I.

HARRIET, TO SAPHIRA.

Myrtle-Hall.



YOU receive this, my dear
Saphira, as a proof of my
punctuality.—I arrived here
on Tuesday, after a most agreeable jour-
ney. The roads, over which we passed,
afforded, from each side, the most pleasing

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B

prospect

prospect imaginable of a fine open country. The verdure of the trees, and party-coloured meadows, were delightful to the view: I hardly knew where to fix my eyes, in such an orderly confusion of charming objects.

Upon my arrival at this hospitable mansion, I was met by my aunt, who received me with the affection of a friend, and the tenderness of a parent. She appears to be a most agreeable woman: her age about fifty. Her person is tall and well shaped. Her face (tho' somewhat impaired by the destroyer *Time*) is yet, in my opinion, handsome. She has exceeding fine eyes, which still retain their sparkling beauties. By her

ad-

address it is sufficiently apparent that she is no stranger to the polite world, tho' at such a distance from it.

You will, no doubt, expect me to give you some account of this place, in which I propose to reside. Indeed, my dear girl, your Harriet's pen is unequal to the task; for it is a perfect paradise of sweets. A delightful avenue, on each side of which are rows of shady elms, whose towering branches mingle with each other, and are a habitation to a set of little warblers, whose tuneful throats afford a most charming melody, leads to a noble house, situated on a rising ground, and from every side of it the eye is ravished with a crowd of

different beauties. Adjoining to a very large garden is an extensive grove, in the middle of which is a cascade, close to that, a small arbour, composed of myrtle, jasmine, and woodbines. The hand of nature seems only to have been employed in decorating this lovely place: every thing, indeed, appears in the most enchanting, wild disorder, and far surpasses any ornament that art could have invented. A mazy walk, whose intricate path adds sweet variety, brings you to a fine park well stocked with deer, at the end of that is a summer house commanding a view of the road, on which there are continually carriages passing. In short, my dear Saphira, I never 'til now beheld such a beauteous scene

scene as is here displayed. My natural fondness for a rural life will encrease, and I think I shall never have a wish to visit again the metropolis.

About a mile from us is a very genteel neighbourhood. Several families of distinction resort there at this time of the year, and never fail paying their respects to my aunt. We were visited yesterday by three ladies; and, were I possessed of some share of my lovely friend's vivacity and cleverness, I would not fear attempting a sketch of their different characters; but, as it is, I own I cannot help avowing my timidity, conscious as I am of my incapability: however, as I know your good-nature will

overlook every imperfection in your friend, I will even venture.

Lady Raymond, her daughter, and Miss Georgina Melville, composed the trio. We were to have been honoured with Sir Charles's company; but he, unluckily, was engaged. Unluckily, I say, because I hear' he is esteemed a very sensible, well-bred young gentleman; therefore, I think we lost a pleasure. I like much the conversation of a man whose understanding is not tinged with modern fopperies. I often wonder at the greater part of our sex, who listen with attention to the unmeaning flattery of a fantastical coxcomb, who, while paying them compliments,

ments, admires himself alone ; and if a plain sensible man attempts conversing with him, he flies with, “ O ! the stupid wretch ! what grave horrid stuff ! It “ puts one in the vapours.” And then resumes the idle chat before mentioned. What a pity it is that women should so mislead themselves ! when a moment’s reflection would—But I forget—excuse this digression, I will now return to our visitors.

Lady Raymond is a widow about forty, an agreeable woman, and very sensible : I like her much. Miss Raymond, her daughter, is indeed an original ; I don’t think England can produce such another. She is about

eighteen, her person not tall, her face naturally tolerable, but every feature is distorted with affectation: violently in love with her own sweet person, which she fancies the mirror of perfection, and well persuaded of her being mistress of every thing requisite to make an accomplished woman.—Her cousin Georgina is about the same age, but her direct contrast. She is truly amiable: Her person exceedingly genteel, and, though not a beauty, is perfectly pleasing. Her conversation is the reverse of that of her cousin's, as she never fails to prejudice every one in her favour who hears her talk—Indeed it is impossible to avoid admiring her. A visible melancholy overspreads her countenance, which she
endea-

endeavours, but in vain, to conceal. I discovered, while conversing with her, that frequent sighs interrupted her discourse. She appeared to be particularly attentive to me, and indeed I was much pleased at it; for I feel a rising friendship for her, which I hope will be improved. I begged her to visit me frequently, which request she has promised to comply with; and I make no doubt but we shall be pleasing companions, as our dispositions seem to agree.

Miss Raymond teased me with so much foolish chat, that I could by no means relish it. She wondered such a lovely creature could bear the thought of leaving the bewitching charms of the town,

and retire amidst a set of clowns, for that the country people were no better. I answered her, that I found charms only in the country, and that I was persuaded, London could afford nothing but bustle and hurry. She exclaimed at my horrid taste, then simpered at her vivacity, as she called it. Singing was proposed. She was the first fixed upon for that purpose. I asked her to sing a much admired air of Mrs Weichfell's. She gave a shriek, and wondered I could think her so unpolite as to sing English. I gazed with astonishment at the ridiculous simpleton, but made no reply; she then (after a dozen times coughing, and complaining of a violent hoarseness) began an Italian air, which she sung
most

most wretchedly, and heartily glad was I when the croaking was finished. At my aunt's request I touched the harp-fichord, and sung two or three songs. After tea we walked some time in the garden, and then our guests left us, but not 'till we promised to return the visit to-morrow. My aunt informed me that Georgina has been in the country but a short time, and that she came for the recovery of her health by the benefit of the air; for 'tis thought she is in a consumption. I hope it is not so, as I promised myself much pleasure in her company.

Are you not tired, my dear Saphira, with reading this long epistle? I will

trespass no longer on your patience than to desire you will write to me often, and tell me what is going forward in town, how you employ your hours, and how many new admirers you get. Tell me all this, and as much more as you please; and you will oblige

Your affectionate,

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER II.

SAPHIRA TO HARRIET.

THanks to my dear Harriet for her letter, which is just delivered to me; and though I am in violent haste to dress for Ranelagh, I have taken my pen to answer it.—Am I not wonderfully good? But, Harriet, why, surely, my dear girl, your senses are intoxicated with this paradise of sweets, as you call it:—You will soon begin to fancy yourself in Arcadia, and imagine you are the princess of it.—An Arcadian princess! Charming sound! Is it not? Your description is quite inviting: one would almost wish to pass a month or two with

with you, by way of trial; but then what a sacrifice I should make! That dear Elyfian Ranelagh, and that charming paradise Vauxhall, must be left. Who can bear such a thought? And then you have no pretty fellows to help kill the tedious hours; they must be yawned away in the company of an old, prim, maiden aunt, and sometimes that of a neighbouring awkward Miss or two.—Oh, horrid!—But, to be serious.—“Is that possible?”—Why, yes, my pretty sermonizing friend, it is.—Now for it.—Oh, but first I must tell you of a conquest I made last night at a card assembly. A lord, Harriet! And such a lovely creature! I am absolutely dying for him. Such eyes! such teeth!

teeth ! and such a charming form ! A perfect *Adonis*, on my word.

You know I hate cards, and seldom play ; I however seated myself at the side of my sister to observe her. Lord Courtly was walking about, and at last came to our table (my mother, ' Dieu merci, was at the other end of the room) and seeing me idle, he attacked me with some witty raillery, which I retorted. A conversation ensued, and we became quite sociable. His discourse was infinitely pleasing, all the airs of a polite man of fashion. Oh ! how I was envied by the rest of the females, who were ready to burst with rage at seeing me taken such notice of, and they

they neglected! I enjoyed it.—True woman, you know. He intreated me, as I hinted fears of my mother, to permit his visits secretly. I would have answered, Yes, but fear of her displeasure, should she discover them, prevented me. How provoking! As if a girl of eighteen could not distinguish proper acquaintance without the advice of her mother. By necessity, therefore, not inclination, I was constrained to say, No. He was wretched at hearing the fatal monosyllable. Natural enough, you know, as he was so deeply smitten. Sophia observed us, and whispered me to beware of my mother, who was just rising to come to us. I told Lord Courtly that we must separate. He cast
his

his lovely eyes on mine, took my hand, pressed it, and swore he lived but in my presence, nor knew he how he should support my absence. I had not time to make any reply but with my eyes, whose language, I dare say, he understood. My mother joined Sophia and me, and we drove home. I am going to-night to Ranelagh, not without hopes of seeing my amiable lover: if we meet, he will surely find an opportunity to speak to me—that don't admit of a doubt. I dare say he is apt enough at invention when a lady is in the case.

Sophy is at my elbow; she desires her love to Harriet, and will make me say, I deserve to be scolded; but I am
sure

sure my dear girl won't chide.—I am summoned to my toilet. Adieu, for the present.

Saturday morning, 1 o'clock.

Just returned from Ranelagh, dear Harriet! and having dismissed my attendant, I resume the pen to tell you how propitious fortune has been to my wishes. Our party consisted of Sophia, her lover, Miss Essex, and my ladyship. We had taken a turn in the gardens, and were just entering the room, when, to my great joy, I espied Lord Courtly. But how happy was I when Mr. Frankland said he knew him, and accosted him familiarly! He saluted me respectfully, and asked permission to join us.

You

You may be sure I readily assented with the rest of the company. He placed himself at my side, and began again the agreeable chit chat that had so engaged me the preceding evening. Oh! Harriet, indeed he is more and more pleasing. Our time was spent most pleasantly, the hours flew swift, every thing conspiring to make them appear short. A party for Vauxhall was proposed, and accepted; so that we have a plan to pass a few more hours together, and I have contrived a secret method to receive his letters. Sophia, with a significant look, asked me if Lord Courtly is not a pleasing companion. "Nothing extraordinary," said I, "but well enough to flirt with, "because he is a handsome fellow, and
"one

“one loves to create envy among the females.” It seems he has the character of being a great rake, so that we must not have him introduced at home, for fear of consequences. He handed us into the carriage, and then we parted.

You give a droll character of Miss Raymond; I should like to see the genius.—And so her cousin is melancholy?—Poor thing! In love, I suppose.—O! that little tyrant, Cupid, what havock does he make with most of our Sex!—As you two are to *become* friends, I imagine she will not hesitate to communicate the cause of her dejection; and as we two *are* friends, I hope you will tell it me, and be assured it will rest secure
in

in my breast; for I have no other female to whom I should think it worth my while to impart it.

I long also to hear your account of Sir Charles. But tell me, Harriet, have you no pretty fellows in your remote part of the globe? Why, you are positively buried alive, child. Prithee tell me that you have made a conquest.—O, a thought has just struck me—you go to church, to be sure, and there you will certainly meet all the country beaus; send me word if there are any among them tolerable, and whether they will be worth the pains of polishing. Write soon, and believe me affectionately your friend,

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

HARRIET to SAPHIRA.

Dear Saphira,

I Think my last informed you of an intended visit to Raymond-hall. Agreeable to promise, my aunt and I went yesterday to dine. We found the ladies ready to receive us, and expressed much pleasure at our approach. The usual compliments over, Miss Raymond told me, I should soon see her brother, whose curiosity was greatly excited at the description she had given of me. “ And “ I do assure you,” added she, “ you “ must keep a great guard on your “ heart; for my brother is possessed of “ many

“many accomplishments.” I assured her of there being no danger of losing it, even though I should find him more amiable than report proclaimed him. I was soon freed from her nonsense, by the truly agreeable Georgina, who assured me of her being happy to see me; and that nothing would conduce more to her satisfaction, than if I would permit her to rank among the number of my particular friends. The offer appeared too advantageous, as well as pleasing, to be rejected: I therefore accepted it with transport; and we have mutually agreed to form a sincere friendship. Ah! Saphira, what a pleasing word! How much is it talked of, how little understood! How few there are
capa-

capable of a sincere, disinterested friendship! The world in general mistake the name. Surely, if it was considered as sacred as it really is, it would not be so often abused. A real friend is a real treasure; but, like most treasures, not easily found. We often meet with those who give themselves the name; but when once they are put to the trial, they forfeit it. A real friend, Saphira, hesitates at nothing to give undoubted proof of being so, will accompany you in every dismal moment of distress, and generously share your grief. How much is such a one to be prized!

Georgina has promised to entrust me with the cause of her melancholy, and
in

in her turn, has insisted, I shall make her acquainted with my little secrets. Indeed she merits all my confidence. Excepting my dear Saphira, I do not know so amiable a girl. We were in the garden 'till near the time to dine, when Miss Raymond, who had just finished the toilet's important task, came running to inform us of her brother's arrival. We bent our course immediately towards the house, and were met (at the entrance of a large and elegant room that fronts the garden) by Sir Charles. His sister introduced me to him, and we joined the rest of the company. At dinner the conversation turned on various subjects, when Sir Charles displayed a fund of good sense. His

remarks were judicious, his manner polite, and his sentiments truly noble. The description I have heard of him improved upon being in his company. He discovered a liberal education without being the least pedantic. His address is easy and free. He is quite the man of fashion without being the fop, a fault too commonly an attendant on that character. He has a great share of vivacity, which he keeps in proper bounds. An honest heart seems to dictate all he utters, which join'd to the gracefulness of his person (for he is really handsome) at once inspire sentiments of respect and admiration. We passed a very agreeable day, and returned home well pleased. Georgina
has

has promised me her company for a week, and is to come to-morrow.

I have this instant got a letter from you, which, by the date, I ought to have been favoured with two days ago. I am sure those who detained it, could have no notion of its being so much wished for, or they would have forwarded sooner. As it is very late, I shall not stay to answer it now, but expect to hear next post from,

Your affectionate,

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER IV.

From the same to the same.

I Have taken up my pen to answer my dear Saphira's lively epistle, but how unequal am I to the task! How is it possible that I (while in this place, which is as strange to you as its inhabitants) can furnish matter for your amusement? You attack me with so much raillery, on my description of the country, that I have need of some share of courage to tell you, that I find its charms increase daily; of much indeed, that I am, as you say, almost intoxicated with this paradise of sweets. You will no doubt think me amazingly stupid,

pid, when I assure you, that I suffer you unenvied to enjoy the round of amusements, and glittering show of Ranelagh, the delightful bustle of the beau-monde, the joy of being admired, and having a train of admirers at your command; but it is even so. While your time and attention is engrossed by the numerous avocations and gay circle of delights that are found in the metropolis, I can, with infinite satisfaction, condescend to enjoy the humble amusements that constitute the felicity of this little spot.

I have not a doubt but that my lovely Saphira, will make conquests wherever she appears: but be cautious, dear girl, how you form an acquaintance—

As a friend you will forgive me, if I deliver my thoughts as freely as they occur. I hate to check my pen, and was I obliged to restrain it, my fondness for writing soon would cease: then pardon me, dear Saphira, and do not misconstrue one word to my disadvantage, but attribute what I say (though contrary to what your imagination suggests) to an over-ruling affection that I have for you: I shall deliver my sentiments without art, or form, free and simple as they appear to me.

Be exceedingly careful in your behaviour to men: treat them with a becoming familiarity, that they may have respect for you, but never be so liberal
and

and light in your conversation, as to let them lay hold of any part of your speech as may lead them to take the least liberty. I intreat you to be ever watchful in this particular, and let not their subtilty and craft steal on you in an unguarded hour. Your natural vivacity may probably hurry you into indiscretions which a moment's recollection, joined to the goodness of your heart, would not suffer you to commit.

I do not like the account you send me of Lord Courtly. A gay young man, such as you represent, is not a fit companion for you to make choice of. If he loves, as he would make you believe, why should he hesitate on

openly avowing his passion? And your consent obtained, why not ask your mother's permission to pay his addresses? She is prudent, discreet, and sensible, and I dare say would have no objection to countenance any one, whom you approve, and whose honour and sincerity is conspicuous; but he seeks a clandestine correspondence, and wishes to appear your lover to no one but yourself. Let your own good sense (of which nature has been so liberal to you) operate, and you will rather regard such an offer as an insult. Why should he wish to see, or correspond with you clandestinely? What views can he have? Self-interested ones, be assured. You consented to let him write to you: the
innocency

innocency of your intentions, eclipsed the impropriety of such a condescension — mature reflection will point out to you, how much you was to blame: He himself must suppose you imprudent; and do you think, if his love for you was founded on the basis that it ought to be, he would attempt to make you guilty of any action that will not bear a scrutiny? O! no; a man who loves a woman, will regard it as a point of duty to himself, to be careful he hurries her into no imprudent action.

It may, perhaps, seem strange that I should attempt to moralize in this manner, and offer you advice, who am myself in so much need of it; but it

is easily accounted for: We can ever discern faults in others, though we are blind to our own; therefore it is likely you will discover a numerous train of follies in your friend, and if so, you have my free consent to use the same freedom with me.

As the preceding part of this letter may perhaps make you grave, it will be but kind to endeavour at dissipating the gloom I may have occasioned, by reciting an adventure which I hope will make you laugh..

Accompanied by my fair friend, I went yesterday to see a Lady who, it seems, is much admired for her personal

sonal accomplishments.. She received us with infinite politeness and affability, assured me she should be happy with my acquaintance, and that during her stay in the country (which is about three months every summer) she would do all in her power to contribute to my amusement.. I thanked her in a manner such an offer merited.

She is about thirty, exceedingly gay and lively, and has a number of admirers; her conversation is pleasing, and she is a very elegant figure.. We soon became sociable, and seemed to forget our acquaintance had been so short.. We staid with her more than two hours, and she insisted on our returning in the

afternoon, which we promised to do, went, and found Mrs. Arundel quite alone. She met us without ceremony, and after tea proposed a walk, to which we readily assented. It was an exceeding fine evening; and how much was I delighted with the various beauties of nature! The brightness of the corn-fields and meads, bedecked with flowers, had far greater charms than the Mall when thronged with beaux and belles. Returning, we were met by a gentleman, who, to all appearance, was an admirer of Mrs. Arundel. As he is the hero of my tale, it is necessary to describe him. You may, perhaps, have met with him in town, for he is in the guards. His person not very tall, rather

ther inclined to fat; his face agreeable enough; has rather a lisp in his speech. In regard to his understanding, I own, if I speak my sentiments, it does not seem very brilliant. He is deeply read in romance; every syllable he utters borrowed from that source. But I need say no more of the noble Captain; you will, by his letter, be able to form a just idea of him. After addressing Mrs. Arundel in a gallant, familiar manner, the conversation became general. Though seemingly attentive to *her*, it required but little penetration to discover his desire of knowing who *I* was. Georgina perceived it, and whispered me that I had made a conquest. "Not a very desirable one," said

said I, "if one may judge by appearance."

At about two miles distant is a cave at the bottom of a hill. It is inhabited by an old woman, and by way of variety, people, hereabouts, go sometimes to drink tea. They were discoursing of this place, and I expressed a desire to see it. Captain Shallow immediately grasped at the opportunity of assuring me how happy he should be to conduct me thither, and begged I would permit him the honour to attend me. I thanked him with indifference. By this time we got to Mrs. Arundel's house, where we left them, and returned home in my aunt's carriage. The
next

next morning, Georgina, and I, were discoursing of the preceding evening's entertainment, and laughing at the Captain, who seemed to be violently smitten with my charms, when a servant came, and behold, a note from Mrs. Arundel, enclosed a letter from the pretty die-away. I send you a copy of both.

“ **M**RS. Arundel's compliments
“ to Miss Harriet Denham. Will
“ be happy to hear that herself and
“ friend were not fatigued with the last
“ night's walk. Mrs. Arundel has, at
“ the earnest request of Captain Shal-
“ low, enclosed his letter, but has not
“ inform-

“ informed him of Miss Harriet’s
“ name.”

“ **W**ITH what pleasure I take
“ up my pen to tell the most
“ charming Miss —— the pleasure I
“ receive in the remembrance of her
“ beauties, and what impatience I shall
“ feel ’till I am favoured with the sight
“ of them again ! A happiness I hope
“ to enjoy on Wednesday at the cave,
“ at six o’clock, if that hour suits ; if
“ it should not, any other that will be
“ more convenient, I shall obey, and
“ then hope to be favoured with the
“ company of my old friend, and the
“ most agreeable —— to tea. Could I
“ name her, I should be better satisfied,
“ for

“ for while she remains unknown, I
“ cannot help supposing her a divi-
“ nity, sent by the mischievous God
“ of Love, to deprive our sex of all
“ earthly repose, and particularly that
“ of her ever devoted, and most faith-
“ ful,

SHALLOW.”

Tell me, Saphira, did you ever read any thing half so ridiculous? And what freedom, to dare send me a letter without apologizing for such impertinence! I suppose he imagines that this letter, joined to the allurements which are generally found in a cockade and shoulder-not, will certainly delight a country girl (as it is in that character I appear

appear to him) and that he will have no difficulty to arrive at his most sanguine wishes. His insufferable vanity, I dare avow, will make him indulge these thoughts; but I shall take care to rouse him from these dreams so pleasing, before he is aware of it. Georgina would fain persuade me to have some diversion with him, but I can by no means agree to it, as I think it dangerous to meddle with a *foolish fop*, therefore, I will avoid him.

I have received a letter from my brother, who intends us his company for a week or ten days. I wish my dear Saphira were here; what an agreeable party we should have!

When

When you can spare time from more agreeable amusements, I hope you will answer this long epistle.

Adieu.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER V.

SAPHIRA to HARRIET.

AS soon as I can recover this fit of the spleen, into which my dear Harriet's sermonizing epistle has thrown me, I will attempt to write.

You were ever a mighty grave girl, but this vile country has made you ten times worse.—So, you have taken it into your wise head, that I am forming an imprudent acquaintance, therefore think it necessary to waste your precious time, and paper, in writing a sermon about it.—How much better might you be employed! — But, Harriet, this gay Lord is not so dangerous as you imagine. He's
a beau,

a beau, child, a real beau; and you know every one allows a beau to be a very harmless kind of animal. For my part, I esteem a beau just as I do my lap-dog, who serves to divert a leisure hour, with the pretty engaging tricks he has learned; and one may, with equal safety, play with him, for he is too civilized to bite—so, you see, I have nothing to fear from Lord Courtly.

I am glad you have met with such a pleasing companion as Georgina. Your description of her makes me desirous to see her; but I charge you, don't let her superior merit supplant me in your esteem; tell her I have a prior claim, and will not give it up.

To

To be sure this Sir Charles is a something uncommon, if he merits the encomiums you so lavishly bestow on him. I cannot forbear laughing at your saying he has an honest heart. Poor Harriet! I am afraid yours is caught. But why don't he come to town? The rest of the pretty fellows would only then appear like little stars. He, like the rising sun, would eclipse them all, and, with his dazzling brightness, and superior influence, chase them from our presence. I long to see him, and have half a mind to visit you, in order to procure myself that pleasure. But then, should I not run a risk? — I may, perhaps, be generous enough to make him a present of my heart, and he may not be grateful enough

enough to give me his in return. This is, I think, more than probable; for a serious, sentimental friend of mine will, most likely, steal it; and then, alas! the gay Saphira, what would become of her? On second thoughts, I'll e'en stay where I am, to avoid danger.

Amazing! a cockade in the remote part of the globe! and in the guards too! I desire you will send him to *me*. But harkee, be sure you get a frank, for there are few such worth paying postage for. I congratulate you on the conquest. But you call him a *foolish fop*. Fye, child, how can you be so unpolite? You should suppress those blunt truths. Besides, a fop is most admired in the genteel world.

You

You have, positively, no taste. I might venture to lay a trifle now, that this fop, whom you despise, is greatly admired by the major part of our sex; for to be in the fashion, one *must* admire him. - It is the most awkward supposition you can form, to imagine you will meet with one sensible man in fifty; but to make amends, we have a plentiful store of fools, fops, and macaronies.

Who can help being charmed with such a dying epistle? You are too cruel not to answer it. How superlatively ridiculous! Surely, could it be the produce of his own silly brain? I am of Georgina's opinion; by all means have some diversion with him. You don't
want

want for talents, then why not exert them, and make him appear as great an ideot to every one else, as he has taken pains to appear to you?

Who is this Mrs. Arundel? Learn her true character. I fear some latent sparks, which, when discovered, will not shew to her advantage. I wish I may be mistaken; but it was strange, methinks, that she should take the liberty of sending his letter.

Sophia's wedding-day is, at last, fixed for Thursday. She wishes you here, so do I. But what avails wishing?

VOL. I.

D

I just

I just now saw your brother, who informed me of his intended visit. I told him that, without great care, it might prove a fatal one. He assured me, he foresaw no danger; and begged to know if I did.

“To be sure,” said I; “for I’ll lay my life you are robb’d before you return.”

He stared.

“Harriet,” continued I, “has got a very amiable girl with her; and, unless you secure your heart, she will certainly steal it from you.”

He

He replied, with a laugh, if he thought there was the least probability of that, he would beg me to take care of it till his return: but I assured him I had already so many hearts entrusted with me, that I could not think of taking care of his.

“ Well then,” said he, “ I must e’en trust to chance.” — So we parted.

A letter from Lord Courtly! Excuse me, dear Harriet, I must break off abruptly to read it.

Adieu.

SAPHIRA.

D 2

LET-

LETTER VI.

HARRIET TO SAPHIRA.

THIS day's post has given me infinite pleasure, as it has brought tidings of one I tenderly esteem, but whom I began to be apprehensive, from not having had a letter these ten days, had discarded me. The sudden transition from fear to joy, has produced a sensible satisfaction.

I am sorry my epistle caused a fit of the spleen: I wish'd it to have a contrary effect. But why not continue an account of your adventures? I beg I may not be deprived of the pleasure I
enjoy

enjoy in reading them. Tell me all your little histories : believe me, I like to know them.

You may, indeed, with propriety, laugh at my talking of honesty of heart, as it has long since been exploded the polite world. However, the distance I am at from it, must plead my excuse for such an antiquated phrase ; and you can only, with astonishment, exclaim at the rusticity of my notions. Sir Charles is worthy more encomiums than my weak pen can bestow ; yet my heart is not touched, as you suppose ; that is steeled against every attack ; and, I assure my dear Saphira, will remain so. As I am fond of riding, Sir Charles is to attend

me on horseback. I propose myself much pleasure, and long for to-morrow morning. I have told Georgina what you say; who answered, she would be content to be a partner with you. Her health impairs daily, owing, I believe, to a melancholy, which seems to have taken deep root.

About four years since she became acquainted with a young gentleman, to whose amiable qualities her generous heart could not remain insensible. Her innocence and exalted merit made no less impression on him, who embraced every opportunity, by the most tender and respectful assiduities, to make her acquainted with his affection for her. Dictated
by

by sincerity, he avowed his love. She, unskilled in the arts too often practised by our sex, suffered him to meet a grateful return. Necessity compell'd them to correspond in secret. Their interviews were seldom, and those very short. Each day brought increase of affection; and nothing was apparently wanting to compleat their mutual happiness. This continued for some months: however, absence, the natural inconstancy of mankind, and a variety of objects, alienated his attention from the truly amiable Georgina. She often wrote to him, but could get no answers. This much alarmed her; but she was consoled when she recollected there might be unavoidable circumstances that might probably pre-

vent his writing. She imagined herself secure in his esteem, and vainly thought his attachment to her as permanent as hers to him. Many months elapsed without hearing of, or seeing him. At length, chance proved propitious to her wishes. He accosted her with the utmost tenderness, and, with assurances of unabated affection, quieted the apprehensions, and dispell'd the doubts which had taken possession of her breast. She forgot the many miserable hours his neglect had caused; the present pleasing one absorbed the remembrance of every painful idea. Vows of love and constancy beguiled the short time they passed together; ages of happiness they comprised in moments, and enjoyed Heaven in epitome.

tome. They parted, with promises to meet soon again. She assures me, that, when she was alone, and had time for reflection, the satisfaction she experienced at thinking of this interview, was greater than she can express; but as it is not common for sublunary joys to be permanent, her dreams of happiness were soon over. He was not punctual. She sent to him, received no answer. She became uneasy, yet could, by no means, prevail on herself to think him in fault. Strange infatuation! She still amused her imagination with pleasing forms, and, instead of opposing the progress of her increasing affection, indulged it. Some time after, she was paying a visit to a friend of hers, when seated in her

dressiug-room at breakfast, and observing a news-paper, she took it to read; but who can express the various passions with which she was agitated, when the first line she cast her eyes on, told her, that her much loved Henry was—married! In vain she struggled to overcome the tremor that had seized her: unable to endure the painful conflict, she fell fainting from her chair. Her friend used every art to recover her, which skill at length compleated. She restored her to life and misery. Not chusing to divulge the fatal cause of her indisposition, she returned home, and was seized with a violent fever, which continued some time: however, youth, and a good constitution, lent their aid, and she grew better;

better ; but a settled melancholy took place of her usual vivacity, which she has indulged so far, as to impair her health exceedingly, and it is now thought she is in a decline.

This account she has favoured me with. In vain do I use every argument my imagination can suggest, to point out to her the folly of indulging a passion for a man who has rendered himself so totally unworthy her least attention. Every endeavour that friendship can dictate have I put in practice, to persuade her to banish from her mind what can only be the source of perpetual inquietude ; but all is fruitless ; the remembrance of him takes possession of her

whole soul, and renders it incapable of admitting any other sentiment. Will not your tender heart sympathise with mine, and own her situation to be truly pitiable? How inexcusable is he, who has caused her unhappiness! Her peace of mind irretrievably lost, how much has he to answer for! Tho' Georgina, with a peculiar meekness, attributes all she has felt to her own imprudence, in suffering an ungoverned passion to over-
sway her reason. I shall continue to use every art to blot him from her mind; and I hope the lenient hand of time, added to my efforts, will produce the wished effect.

My

My aunt's indisposition increases, and I begin to have some fears for her life. She is pleased with my attention, but insists I shall not confine myself. Lady Raymond has promised that my fair friend shall stay with me till she is better. Tell Sophia I wish her every happiness. Adieu, I am prevented making this longer at present.

I resume the pen, to finish my letter, which, till now, I have been prevented doing, by the arrival of Mrs. Arundel, who came to drink tea. Her lively conversation is really engaging, tho' I think it sometimes borders too much on levity. I was somewhat circumspect; perhaps
owing

owing to your hints. She rallied me on the conquest I had made, and assured me she knew many ladies who would be happy to be in my place. I answered her, that there was a certain set of females, whose vanity was pleased with the unmeaning flattery of a coxcomb; to those I would have Captain Shallow repair with his pompous phrases; for my part, I could by no means listen to them. She expressed great astonishment at my want of taste in this particular, and foolishly enough appealed to Georgina, if he was not very handsome.

“My friend,” replied the amiable girl, “seeks something more than a mere
“form. Capt. Shallow is agreeable
“enough

“ enough to look at; and if he wishes
“ to continue so, he must remain silent;
“ for the instant he attempts to con-
“ verse, the modern fopperies he has
“ borrowed from those whose under-
“ standings are as weak as his own, will
“ be conspicuous; and that, to a sensi-
“ ble mind, can’t fail proving disagree-
“ able.”

She was not, however, of our opi-
nion; the captain appeared to her very
clever, and she seemed to think it im-
possible for us to have spoken our sen-
timents. She endeavoured to prevail on
us to go to the cave, but I refused.
“ Georgina and I will go together,” said
I; “ for, as I am fond of retirement, I
“ shall

“ shall like the place best when there
“ is least company.”

You were rather smart upon my brother. I am of his opinion, there can be no danger of his being robb'd ; for his gay disposition secures his heart.

Let me hear from you ; and tell me if you have dismiss'd Lord Courtly ; or if he renders himself worthy to be your attendant.

Adieu.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

SAPHIRA TO HARRIET.

SO, so, Harriet, matters go swimmingly, I find. Sir Charles is become a visiter, and is to attend you on horseback ! No wonder the Captain does not find admittance. He, with his trifling chat, must fly when the phœnix appears. “ My heart is steeled
“ against every attack.” May be so, but, if I have any skill in divination, it will soon be uncased ; the hard struggles it will make will burst the steel, nay, even adamant would be no barrier. How I shall enjoy seeing you over head and ears in love ! Do not
be

be ashamed to own it, Harriet, it is but an involuntary failing, a venial fault, what, alas ! we are all subject to. Heigho !

Poor Georgina !. How much do I pity, how much admire her ! O ! the vile wretch who has plunged her into this abyfs of distress ! I wish he was tormented with the most severe tortures. He thinks it, perhaps, a meritorious act ; but it is the fate of many deserving women to meet with these deceivers, therefore no great cause of triumph for him. If every girl was like me, such monsters would be banished female society. He had not then honour enough to inform her of his intended marriage ?

No,

No, no, he judged more proper, for had he made her acquainted with his intention, she would most probably have continued her esteem; but, as it is, he cannot fail being confident, she must despise him. By all means make her hate him: it is a fine time to be revenged, for pretty fellows are as thick as summer flies. Send her to me, I will warrant to restore her vivacity. Do not let her stay in the vile country, that alone is sufficient to make her melancholy. I wish I had her here, I would perfect her cure before any physician in town. Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and masquerades I would prescribe, instead of draughts from the apothecary's, and I dare say those repeated would drive away

away her melancholy. Tell her to come to me, I say.

Have you not seen the noble Captain since the receipt of his letter? Surely he cannot be violently smitten as we supposed, or he would have found some method to see his divinity again, or, have favoured her with another dying epistle. But, perhaps, he is afraid to venture a second, since the first met with such an unfavourable reception. If this is the case (and I really think it is) what a pusillanimous animal it is! I dare avow, there are none of his brother fops who would not have tried the success of, at least, a second attempt. Were I in your place, my pride would
be

be hurt at this seeming indifference; for hang it, one likes the *love*, though one despises the *lover*.

You desire me to continue an account of my adventures, because you know I have a little of the Quixote in my composition, and therefore, I suppose, promise yourself entertainment. Bless thee, child, my little histories are too trifling to engage your least attention. However, I will satisfy you in one point: Lord Courtly is still as assiduous as ever. The Vauxhall appointment took place, and proved infinitely agreeable. He talks much about flames and darts; but they, as yet, have not had power either to warm, or pierce my heart: I
still

still boast my native freedom; and to preserve it, I keep a train of admirers at my command, for a variety will certainly secure my heart from any particular attachment. One may be handsome, another sensible, a third agreeable, each of these, were I not acquainted with the others, might engage my whole attention; whereas, at present, I can admire each for his different perfection, and so avoid being particularly attached to either. How do you approve my scheme?

You, no doubt, remember Mr. Harper, whom you have seen at our house: a violent favourite with my mother, because he is grave, and not a coxcomb.

This

This is her phrase. He is of late become a constant visiter, and does me the honour to be particularly attentive to me. My mother observes it, is highly-pleased, and preaches of his perfections from morning till night, and is angry at me for ridiculing him. Really, Harriet, it is the strangest mortal that ever nature formed. I can with the utmost difficulty refrain from laughing in his face very often. I am apt to think he is an intended lover. I long to hear him make love, I am sure I shall have fine diversion. I have a notion he will be like the citizen in the Farce, will be at a loss how to address me, 'till, after a pause, he will hand a chair

chair and ask me to sit—then, be so happy that he has broke the ice!—

Is your brother with you yet? How does he like Georgina? Apropos; how do you like the airing with the charming baronet? Make haste to write, and satisfy the curiosity of

Your

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

HARRIET to SAPHIRA.

FORGIVE me, dear Saphira, nor attribute to intentional neglect my not having acknowledged the receipt of your letter before. My brother arrived here last Monday, since when I have been continually engaged, and it is with difficulty that I now find time to tell you how much I am obliged to you for it.

I have, with great exactness, delivered your message to Georgina, who is now with me, and desires her affectionate compliments. To my great mortifica-

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tion,

tion, she has received a summons from town that will oblige her to be there very soon, so that you will have an opportunity of exerting the skill you boast, and I hope, your efforts, joined to her own good sense, will perfect a cure very shortly.

We had the most pleasant ride imaginable on the morning I mentioned. Sir Charles took infinite pains to make the time pass agreeably, and proved very successful in the attempt; for I own, I never in my life passed a few hours more to my satisfaction. He returned with us, and stayed to dine. In the afternoon Georgina and I rambled to the cave. I was delighted with the appearance

pearance of the place and its inhabitants. I think I told you it was at the bottom of a hill; but, as I had not then seen it, I could not be particular.

After traversing three enamelled meadows, you pass through a small wood: at the end of it is a hill, on one side of which are a few trees that lead to the cave. It is not very large, covered entirely with moss, and surrounded with willows that hang nodding over its top. Close by is a bubbling spring, whose silver drops glide gently to a purling stream, and in playful meanders swell the tide. The entrance appears at first rather formidable; but that shortly wears off on seeing two little rooms com-

pleatly furnished with every necessary that such a place requires. We ordered tea, which was served us with the utmost neatness by an old woman, assisted by her grand-daughter, a girl about eighteen, whose innocent simplicity charmed me. We stayed near an hour, and were returning through the wood, when we were at once surpris'd and mortified with the sight of Captain Shallow. He hastened towards us, and, with great respect, assured me, that he was compleatly happy at the rencontre, and much indebted to chance that had been so favourable to him. With a train of ready-made compliments, he expressed how much he adored me, and how wretched he had been, that I would
not

not deign to take notice of his letter. I answered, that I was much offended at his having taken the liberty to send it me, after having been only once in my company, and that too, so short a time. He seemed at a loss for a reply; however, at last, he stammered out, an ungovernable love must plead his excuse; his whole life should be devoted to me, and, by the most tender assiduities, he flattered himself. (vain fool!) he should become worthy my affection, and ardently hoped (presuming impertinence!) I would not deny it him. I suffered a continuance of his unmeaning flattery for some time, till tired with hearing repetitions of it, I resolved to get rid of his troublesome com-

pany, and tried the success of polite argument; but, that having no effect, I was necessitated to alter my behaviour. I assured him he took pains but to purchase trouble, and insisted positively he should leave us, for his company was an intrusion I could by no means suffer. Not even this would do; I was constrained to be tortured with his impertinence, till we got home, and heartily glad was I to be freed from such a companion. What a contrast betwixt Sir Charles and him! I could not help reflecting upon the difference of the characters, and the comparison made the former appear ten times more amiable than before. Yet, how was that possible? for in his person, are united
all

all the graces of his sex; in his behaviour, there are such irresistible charms of ease and politeness, that the most exquisite imagination cannot produce any thing more finished. My brother thinks him as amiable as I do. They are become quite intimate. I almost wish myself in George's place, that I might share his friendship. How happy will that woman be who is destined to be loved by him! Methinks I see you smile at this, and hear you say, Poor Harriet! where is now your boasted insensibility? Indeed, Saphira, esteem only actuates my breast: and to say the truth, it is impossible to see, and converse with Sir Charles, and not esteem him. You suspect that I am in love—No such

E 4 thing,

thing, I assure you, nor will I suffer, what at present is but your bare suspicion, to be improved by me into a palpable evidence. My inferior merit can never have power to attract the all-accomplished Sir Charles. This consideration shall prevent my esteem for him from ripening into affection, lest I should be entangled in a difficulty, from which it will require more skill than I am mistress of to free myself.

My brother admires Georgina much; but there is no *love* in the case.

You ask me how I approve your keeping a train of admirers. If you expect my undisguised opinion, I cannot

not dismiss your demand without remarking, that I think it by no means a laudable conduct. Your conversing with so many men, will draw on a number of unavoidable inconveniences. Conscious of your own innocence, you are regardless of the rude censure of a misjudging world, and give a loose to your fondness for admiration; but call your reason home, reflect, and consider that it is equally necessary to possess the good opinion of the multitude, as to have the innate satisfaction of knowing you do nothing that will justly merit their reproach. In my opinion, a girl is far less criminal who yields her heart and person unreservedly to the man she loves, than she who wantonly

bestows her company and correspondence on every pert witling, who can breathe a sentence or hold a pen, and thinks herself *virtuous*, if she is *chaste*. The conduct of the former, I think, may be justified; of the latter, it cannot.

These sentiments, from a young woman may, perhaps, appear extraordinary; they are, however, the genuine dictates of my heart—for you know I abhor dissimulation.

I remember Mr. Harper well; but, surely, Saphira, he cannot be thought worthy of you. Your mother will not, certainly, insist upon your receiving his addresses. Pray be particular
in

in your next about him, for I feel uneasy.

Adieu, dear Saphira.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER IX.

SAPHIRA to HARRIET.

WHAT strange creatures are mankind! Inconstancy, and a love of variety, seem implanted in their nature. How eager in the pursuit of what they wish to obtain! But when once their desires are gratified, how soon indifference succeeds! I have been led to these reflections by a circumstance which has recently happened to me.

At the request of Miss Essex, I din'd with her on Thursday. There was a great company, among the rest a gentleman and his wife, who have been married

ried about a year, both very young, and, I am told, it was a run-away match. He is pleasing in his person; superlatively so in his conversation; has a remarkable share of natural good sense, which is embellished by a liberal education; good humour, gaiety, and sprightliness, display themselves in every action. In short, he is perfectly pleasing.

His wife is, in general, esteemed pretty. She has a delicate complexion, fine hair and teeth, and the most lovely pair of blue eyes I ever beheld. Her person is not so much in her favour, but her face supplies every other deficiency. She spoke but little, therefore I could not distinguish whether or not her understanding could

could come in competition with that of her husband. After dinner we were exceedingly gay. At the request of Mrs. Effex I sung several songs, and met with numberless encomiums from the young Benedict, which I considered as compliments of course. Miss Effex and I went to her dressing-room, to admire a cap that was just come from the milliner's. We had not been there five minutes before he came posting after us, and insisted on being one of the privy-council. We agreed to his request, and admitted him. After a little time, he begg'd, as the utmost obligation, that Miss Effex would indulge him with a pen and ink, as he had a note which he was under an indispensable necessity of

of answering. She left the room to get what he desired, when he immediately approached me, took my hand, intreated pardon for the freedom, and earnestly beseeched that I would suffer him to convey his sentiments by letter, since time and circumstances prevented his doing so verbally; assured me, that my vivacity and conversation had inspired him with sentiments of respect and admiration, which had given rise to the most lively friendship, and hoped I would not condemn him for acquainting me with what my own merit created. I was struck dumb with astonishment; but recovering myself, was making an effort to reply, when my friend returned and prevented me. We left him

to write, and joined the company. I became grave; Miss Essex remarked it, and enquired the cause. I feared to tell her, therefore attributed it to a sudden pain in my head. We were making a party for quadrille, when Cleander (so he is called) returned, and insisted on making one. I was embarrassed to the last degree during the whole evening, not knowing in what manner to conduct my behaviour towards him. As we had passed the afternoon familiarly, I feared that reserve now would appear particular. Tho' it is probable it might not have been observed by a third person, yet a knowledge of what had passed made me imagine it could not fail appearing obvious. At supper he placed
him-

himself next me, was particularly attentive to all I uttered, and took an opportunity to put a bit of paper under the table into my lap; which I perceiving, threw on the ground, under a pretence of stroaking a spaniel. He stooped, took it up, soon found an opportunity to put the paper in my hand, and immediately went to the other end of the room; so that I was reduced to the alternative of putting it quietly in my pocket, or letting it be seen by the whole company. You may be sure I chose the former, and was all impatience to see the contents, but could not gratify my curiosity till I got home, when I immediately perused my note. The style of it was elegant, the purport such

such as even the scrupulous Harriet could not, with propriety, condemn. He proposed a literary correspondence as a matter absolutely essential to his happiness; and in such a pleasing manner intreated me to write, that I could not refuse him, without doing an outrage to myself; and, as I am fond of scribbling, I was glad of the opportunity to improve myself. The next morning I had just taken my pen, when a rap at the door announced the arrival of Miss Effex, to ask me to take a turn in the Park. I readily went, and had scarcely entered the Mall, when we were accosted by Cleander and another gentleman. The latter engaged Miss Effex, while I was laughing with the other. I rallied him
on

on his behaviour, and wondered how he could entertain the ridiculous notion of forming an acquaintance with any woman, when he had already such an amiable one, who had a prior claim to all his attention, and whose tenderness for him entitled her to all his regard. He was convinced of the truth of that, he said; but, surely, he might indulge a *friendship* for another: if that was denied him, he would shake off the bands of matrimony. This was uttered so heartily, that I could not refrain from bursting into a fit of laughter, of which our companions enquired the cause. He looked mighty silly: my fair friend perceived it, and said she had a notion he was too gallant. I assured her that was
the

the case. "It is a pity he is married," added I, "for he would make a clever lover." He did not seem to approve what I said; however, he enjoin'd me to write to him, which I promised to do. He endeavoured to quiet my rising apprehensions of the impropriety, should it transpire, by saying, that a Platonic system could not be condemned. Indeed, I think there can be no imprudence in a paper acquaintance; but I intend to avoid his company as much as possible, if he aims at being the *lover*, as well as *friend*.

O Harriet, I have heard a tale about the killing captain, which a future letter shall convey; in the mean time, I only
hint,

Hint, don't fancy him all your own, for his heart has already been mortgaged to half the girls in town.

Why do you not write to me? Or is your time so much taken up with the charming Baronet, that you can find no opportunity to oblige your other friends? Tell me, is he still the pleasing, but insensible Sir Charles? Or is he become the dangling Vainlove? Hark! the post-man, I protest. A letter from Harriet. I fly with impatience to read it.

Adieu.

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER

LETTER X.

HARRIET TO SAPHIRA.

Dear Saphira,

I Was just returned from an agreeable walk with Georgina, Sir Charles and my brother, when the post brought your letter. I opened it with eagerness, but was petrified with astonishment at the contents. Your clandestine correspondence with Cleander appears, in my eyes, highly culpable. You say he addresses you under the mask of friendship. More insidious then is the villain: believe me, he will take advantage of your unsuspecting heart. A man of honour would not even harbour

boar a thought of such a nature; on the contrary, he would studiously avoid the company of her who seemed to invade his peace, and seek repose where he would be sure to find it, in the bosom of a virtuous wife: whereas Cleander assiduously embraces every opportunity of being with you, and cherishes the most daring hopes. Sure, your penetration must see through this thin veil, and plainly discover his intended villany. Your receiving a note from him under the table, was a fault that even friendship cannot pardon. How derogatory from the character of a woman of honour! Plato's system of love, is too much despised in these days, for any one to embrace it, much more a
Cleander,

Cleander, whose character and morals are a contradiction to it. I am persuaded, notwithstanding my partiality for you, that there must have been some striking levity in your behaviour, to embolden him to hope his suit would not be rejected. Forgive me; what is in itself so glaringly improper, ought not to be palliated: your conduct, friendship fires me to say, is inexcusable. I conjure you, therefore, Saphira, to stop this correspondence immediately, if you wish to enjoy my esteem; not only mine, indeed, but the esteem of all your friends.

I went yesterday to visit Miss Raymond, and met with a young Lady,
who

who is come to spend a few months with her. Her name is Constantia, she is lately arrived from France, where she has been for education. Her person is quite agreeable; her face though not handsome, perfectly pleasing; her sentiments are exalted, and her actions less confined than one could possibly expect in a girl so lately returned from a cloister. My brother is, in my opinion, quite smitten. He allows he never has met with such an agreeable girl, and that is a full declaration, I think. As to Constantia, a timid diffidence, visible in all her actions when he is present, a sudden glow of satisfaction at his approach, and a reluctance at parting, plainly denotes her to be caught.

Sir Charles grows upon me daily; a generosity of soul is the spring of all his actions. We meet often, and converse with the greatest ease. I shall certainly improve from his company, for I never met with a man so universally agreeable.

Georgina is preparing to go to town, and I am quite dejected at the thought of her leaving me; however, it is some alleviation to my misfortune, to have the innocent Constantia so near me.

My aunt's health declines daily, and her affection for me increases hourly.

The

The servant informs me, Sir Charles is below; excuse therefore, my breaking off abruptly.

I intreat you to drop your acquaintance with Cleander immediately upon the receipt of this, if you value the friendship of

Your

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER XL

SAPHIRA TO HARRIET.

UPON the receipt of yours, I sent instantly to procure you a place in Christie's next sale of curiosities, and depend upon it, my dear girl, you will be esteemed the greatest curiosity there. A petrified woman! Ha! ha! ha: I must lay down my pen, to indulge my risibility. I will venture my life some virtuoso will purchase you, stick you up in a nich, and look upon you as a greater rarity than an Egyptian mummy. Why till now, girl, I thought it was a moral impossibility for a woman to grow inanimate. I intend to get hand-bills printed,

ed, and to place proper persons at the doors of the Pantheon, Almack, and Cornellys to distribute them: the purport as follows:

“Whereas Saphira has, from the
“most unwearied diligence, procured a
“specific, distilled from between the
“fore-finger and thumb of her right
“hand, which has the powerful efficacy of petrifying the female race, it
“is to be hoped the nobility and gentry
“will kindly encourage so laudable an
“undertaking, and employ her, without delay.”

Now, depend upon it, there is not one man in fifty that will not bring

me his wife, as divorces commonly cost three or four hundred pounds, and I will cure them of the inconvenience for a few shillings. I have communicated my intentions to Cleander, who declares I shall begin with his wife.

Apropos; now I mention him, it puts me in mind of the fright the rest of the letter occasioned. Why one would imagine that this inoffensive animal was going to carry on a siege by storm, and seize upon your hapless friend; though if that were the case, believe me, I have cockades sufficient to defend me from the attack. Lord! what a terrible noise you make about it! Your threats so disordered the œconomy of my head, that

511 8 1 I was

I was obliged to send for Courtoy, and use a pound of pomatum, to get it into its natural form again, so that you have been the cause of fear, trouble, and expence. How will you answer this to your conscience?

I shall be happy to see Georgina. Constantia seems only fit for the country, Sir Charles is only fit for you.

Adieu, my dear sentimental girl. I am going this instant with Cleander in his new *vis à vis* to Ranelagh.

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER XII.

GEORGINA TO HARRIET.

London.

ONCE more behold your Georgina amidst this feat of bustle, noise, and hurry. How much do I regret the loss of those sweets that solitude afforded, which I have chearfully tasted with my dear Harriet! I look back with infinite pleasure on the many happy hours we have passed, secure from the idle flatteries one meets with in the metropolis. Once indeed, I could find a relish for its gaieties, but now it is otherwise; they sicken, my fancy palls and takes distaste

distaste at them; I loath the world, and all its follies.

The fatigue of my journey obliged me to be confined to my room for two days. The Physicians think me in a decline, and advise that I should go to the south of France. My mother asks if I have any objection: I answer in the negative. Indeed, my dear girl, it is now a matter of indifference to me in what part of the globe I drag this load of life. I am persuaded that I am journeying apace to that place where my vexed thoughts shall find a calm repose. I wait the period with impatience; and whether the arrival of it happens in

France or England, to me, it matters not.

I went this morning to see Saphira, who received me with marks of the most tender friendship. Upon my word, I think her exceedingly agreeable; her person is so lovely, that it cannot fail to prejudice one in her favour at first sight. Is it not amazing, that beauty should make us so partial to those who possess it? She appears to have a great share of understanding, which seems to have been well improved and corrected. She rallied me on being so melancholy, and endeavoured, with a deal of good-nature, to divert me. She has made me promise to dine with her to-morrow
and

and go to Ranelagh in the evening: the latter is against my will, and I hope to persuade her to excuse me. During my stay, a gentleman, who seems to meet with her approbation, came to see her. She introduced me as her particular friend. His name is Cleander. I cannot but avow my being somewhat surprised, that a girl of her good sense will take any notice of his idle discourse. It requires but little penetration to discover a deal of art lurking under the specious disguise of friendship. Really, I am alarmed for the fair Saphira: the coxcomb is assiduous, and I fear, will unwarily entangle our unsuspecting friend. Admonish her, dear Harriet, to beware of the seducer. It

would be taking too much liberty were I to attempt doing so, as our acquaintance is so new, but you are authorised; do not then hesitate at giving your immediate advice.

Write to me, dear girl, and tell me how you pass your hours. I hope you meet an agreeable companion in Constantia: she does not seem at all calculated for the company of my cousin.

How does Sir Charles? Nay, do not blush, Harriet, but own to me what your eyes have tacitly confessed a thousand times. You love; why disguise it from me? It is a breach of friendship. To you I have discovered the
inmost

inmost recesses of my heart, have exposed all its follies to your view, and can you then refuse making me acquainted with a secret that so nearly concerns your happiness? Sir Charles is worthy of your love, you seem formed for each other. I am well assured that, though he disguises his sentiments, his heart has long since been in your possession. His natural reserve prevents an avowal of his passion; but his frankness will, I dare say, shortly overcome every scruple; and surely, my amiable girl will suffer him to meet a grateful return. Indeed I shall become a warm advocate for the Baronet: the reason is, I know his merit. I will conclude with repeating my request.

Pray

Pray write to me : your letters, only, will compensate for the loss of your company.

Adieu.

GEORGINA MELVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Mr. DENHAM to Col. LIBERAL.

Dear Frank,

I Have omitted writing in hopes of meeting you at Southampton; but as I have changed my mind, and shall not visit that place this summer, I have taken up the pen to tell you, that, as you propose going there, if you will call upon me *en passant*, I shall be glad to see you. We have an agreeable party here, a few select friends compose it; but before you arm yourself, I mean your *heart*, for the blind Bow-boy's but-shaft makes strange work amongst us. For my part, I can neither eat,
drink,

drink, or sleep : an amiable girl, a Constantia here, deprives me of rest. You will find me still your friend, tho' changed in every other particular. My lovely fair one engrosses all my attention : I am rivetted to this spot, and from it nothing will have power to force me, while she remains here. Her merit and virtue have pierced my soul. I can no longer boast my usual indifference, for indeed I am entangled, and that deeply, in the intricate path of love.

Write, and tell me when I may expect to see you, *en attendant*. Believe me

Your sincere friend,

GEORGE DENHAM

LETTER

L E T T E R XIV.

Col. LIBERAL to Mr. DENHAM.

WH Y, hey-day! what a surpris-
ing change is here! The gay,
the dissipated George, dwindled into the
whining Castalio! For shame, man!
Rouse from this lethargy, set the blind
urchin at defiance, follow my example.
No pale-faced wench shall ever have
power to rob me of rest; I love the
sex in general, all afford me equal plea-
sure; and faith, George, I will take
care that none of them shall give me
a moment's pain. It is pleasant to hear
you talk of your Constantia's virtue.

And

And so you pretend to admire her for that, do you? Upon my soul, that is too much. However worthy of admiration, I will warrant it is not impregnable. You are a handsome fellow; attempt to storm the citadel, and she will capitulate, my life for it, or she is no woman.

I propose setting out for Southampton to-morrow, and will certainly call upon you; but, remember, let me have none of your whinings and sighs, for a man in love, is a horrid companion.

No need of your admonition. I may perhaps lose my heart for an hour or so, if any of your girls are handsome, but

I am

I am sure it will regain its native freedom to rove again; for dear variety has irresistible charms!

Adieu.

Poor love-sick George!

F. LIBERAL.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

HARRIET TO SAPHIRA.

Dear Saphira,

THE many times I have given you advice, and the bad success I have met with, has, more than once, induced me to lay aside all thoughts of entering again on the subject, or thinking any more of the perplexities you are involving yourself into, than I would of those of a person whom I never saw. I have laboured to point out to you your errors, but in vain; you will not listen to the dictates of friendship. A consideration of your
tender

tender years, and a knowledge of your good disposition of heart, has inclined me to overlook little sparks of levity; but, indeed, my dear Saphira, you are very blameable: this acquaintance with Cleander, which you still persist in continuing, is an unpardonable fault. How can you, upon reflection, reconcile your conduct to yourself? You are happy in an understanding superior to most we meet with, and this, above all, must make you appear more culpable. Depend upon it, this insinuating designing man will, ere long, throw off the mask, and appear himself. Your eyes will open when it is too late. I intreat you once more to drop the acquaintance. To what end can you wish to continue

abandoning

it?

it ? You have no affection to plead as an excuse ; it is vanity, mere vanity, and a love of admiration, alone, that prompts you to listen to him. He flatters you, and you are pleased at it. Fy, fy, Saphira ! avoid him, shun his company, fly him as you would a serpent, it is more than probable, he will sting more fatally.

We have got a visitor from town, an intimate of my brother's, quite the man of fashion, neat as imported : a Colonel Liberal. He is an elegant figure, young, and very handsome, but too much of the fop for me to admire. Miss Raymond finds a thousand charms in his company and conversation. He pretends

pretends to be violently smitten with her when she is by, but, the instant she disappears, I am affected with the remarks he makes upon her. I overheard part of a conversation betwixt my brother and him last night, and by it have discovered, that the silly girl takes pains to convince him of her partiality for him. He asked George if she had the farthings. He replied in the affirmative. "Faith then," said the gay Colonel, "I will lay close siege; the money has charms, though she has not, and I am sure the girl likes me." My brother conjured him, as he valued his esteem, to attempt nothing dishonourable. He laughed at his request, and swore, if he found
any

any probability of succeeding, he would pursue her with indefatigable industry.

Oh, man! man! what wretches you are! who of us is secure from your insidious arts? Youth, beauty, folly, or good-sense, all in their turn become your prey.

I have received a letter from my amiable Georgina, wherein she gives an account of your friendly reception. She admires you much; thinks you, as I do, very sensible, but also as I do, thinks you are very imprudent to countenance Cleander. She tells me she plainly sees his intentions, and is certain, from his behaviour, he has no honoura-

honourable motive for wishing your acquaintance. To you, perhaps, he may boast a deal. Honour and sincerity are themes much talked of among the modern men; but remember, my dear girl, they are a set of triflers, who harangue on a subject they are not at all acquainted with.

Constantia grows more and more agreeable: she is with me almost every day. Miss Raymond's disposition and hers differ so widely, that she seems happy to embrace every opportunity of being with me. My brother is quite attach'd to her. I taxed him with his fondness for her, which he at first denied; however, with a smile, he told me he knew

I was an adept in the science of love, and that the language of the eyes never escaped me ; and added, he believed his were very expressive when Constantia was present. He is afraid, he tells me, to declare his love to her, lest he should be rejected ; but I fancy there is not much fear of that ; for her innocent heart seems formed to receive the tender impression. A lambent flame warms her breast, which she discovers in every action, tho' 'tis plain she labours to conceal it : she is, in short, truly amiable, and I am glad my brother has discernment enough to discover her merit.

Mrs. Arundel has given us an invitation to meet Sir Charles, his sister, and

Con-

Constantia, at her house to-morrow evening. We are to dance. Sir Charles is to be my partner, Constantia my brother's, and the Colonel is to have the honour of Miss Raymond's hand. I think the conquest will be compleated, as he will then have a fine opportunity to say soft things, and she to listen to them, without being observed.

Write to me, dear Saphira, and tell me you have discarded Cleander; your letter will then afford infinite pleasure to,

Your affectionate,

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER XVI.

SAPHIRA to HARRIET.

WHAT a pity it is, my dear Harriet, that women are not allowed to ascend the pulpit ! You would make a rare preacher : I protest I don't think any of our learned divines could make a better sermon. Lord ! how the church would be thronged with beaux, to listen to the blooming orator ! You would certainly bring about the reformation of many, for they would exclaim, " From lips like those what precepts fail to move ! " Do, Harriet, try the experiment, clap on a huge wig and a gown, and turn missionary.

Well,

Well, I have seen the love-sick Georgina. Why she is quite a piece of still-life. Poor thing! what havock this vile love has made with her! Really, *c'est quelque chose terrible!* Heaven preserve me from it!

An accident happened last night that has so frightened me I have scarcely recovered myself yet; as soon as I can recall my scattered senses I'll tell it you.

With a deal of difficulty I prevailed on Georgina to make one in our party for Ranelagh. To oblige me she assented, tho' contrary to her own inclination. Cleander attended us. He has

an elegant *vis-à-vis*—and it is so easy too! It conveyed us to the dear Elysian. We had stalked about some time, and were just stepping into a box to drink coffee, when poor Georgina gave a shriek, and fainted. I squall'd lustily, for I thought the girl was dead. However, by the assistance of salts and hartshorn, she recovered. A young gentleman then passing, was of infinite use in procuring the restorative. His actions testified the utmost concern; but I thought the man was dumb, for he never once opened his lips; and the moment there was the least appearance of the return of her senses, away he scampered. When she was better, she insisted I should let her return home, as she

she feared a second attack. I was just going to acquiesce in her resolution, when a thought struck me, that there must have been some particular cause for her sudden indisposition, as the instant before she was rather chearful. I enjoined her to tell me; and what do you think it was? Why, Henry pass'd! and the unexpected sight of him caused her to faint.—I wonder if ever I shall be so far gone—I fancy not, Harriet—eh!—what think you?

I insisted she should take one turn more, that I might have a stare at the dear perfidious. She pointed him out to me. On my word he is an elegant figure—the fellow's handsome too. I

could not forbear exclaiming with Juliet,
“ Oh! that deceit should dwell in such
“ a gorgeous palace!” The instant I saw
him, I recollected, it was to him we
were obliged for the drops. He looked
at Georgina; then, with apparent confu-
sion, fixed his eyes on the ground. She
was so much affected, that I thought it
best to leave the place immediately. I
left her at home, and the poor girl is
very ill to-day, I hear. I propose seeing
her this evening. They are going to
post her off for Lisbon, but I think she
may as well stay where she is, while she
lives, as I do not imagine that time will
be long.

Sophia

Sophia frequently enquires after her favourite Harriet. The matrimonial chain fits mighty easy upon her. She is exceedingly fond of her husband, and he doats upon her. They have been married more than half a year, and no talk of a separation yet. They are not at all tired of each other : a circumstance no less singular than extraordinary, in this polite age.

Some visitors are lately arrived from the North, and are to be with Sophia a month or two. They are a new-married couple, and originals, I assure you. She has all the airs of a fine lady ; her dress and behaviour, like the country-

try dames in general, *toute outré*. She was possessed of about eight thousand pounds; the charms of which induced the squire to marry her. Her person is pleasing enough, but she is such an unhappy lump of delicacy, that she can't even bear the fatigue of a walk round Vauxhall gardens. We supped there the other night, *en famille*, and really the noise and bustle of the people, together with a long walk round the orchestra, so much affected her delicate frame, that she was obliged to have recourse to her smelling-bottle every instant, to prevent her fainting.

Young clod-pole, her *cara-sposò*, is a mighty man in his way too; but, unluckily, is so caught with the fine
ladies,

lasses, that he sometimes forgets his Dulcinea at home, and stays out till two or three o'clock. She, at his return, falls into fits, and, Lord-a-mercy! there is such a piece of work! I believe Sophy heartily wishes them in the country again. The fair dame thought it necessary to publish to the whole town her being a bride; and how do you think she managed? — Why, took places in a front-box at Foote's the day after her arrival, and made her appearance in white and silver, with a hoop. Sophia was obliged, from politeness, to attend her. She sent to me to be of the party. I went with an intention to accompany them; but, when I saw the dressed-out puppet — “It won't do,” says I. He,

too, was full dressed, and looked, for all the world, like 'squire Richard in the play. I e'en left the tinfell'd toys to go without me; and, I dare say, they were more stared at than the piece performing.

So, so, you have got another beau! Surely you mean to draw the whole town there.

Lord Courtly is gone to Southampton. I am inconsolable about it. Pray don't stop him by the way.

But, Harriet, suppose this gay son of Mars should march off with Miss Raymond, what a sad affair that would be!

Mama,

Mama, I suppose, would be distracted for the loss of her darling daughter.

So, George is struck thro' the heart, and Constantia too! — Oh! the pretty innocent!

I have no patience with Sir Charles; he must be an insensible piece of stuff, or the fire of your eyes must have captivated him long ago. Pshaw, the man's stupid.

I am going to Georgina—

Adieu.

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

HARRIET TO GEORGINA.

YOUR letter, my dear Georgina, demanded my thanks much sooner. I should certainly have acknowledged the receipt of it before, but that a chain of circumstances have intervened to prevent my doing so.

I am sorry to perceive from the tenor of your epistle, that you still indulge that melancholy so fatal to your peace. Whatever I can say, to persuade you to overcome it, will have no effect; experience has already convinced me of
that,

that, therefore I will tire you with no more repetitions.

I am sorry your health is so much impaired, as to oblige you to seek that relief in a foreign climate, which your own denies. I however hope, that the scene being diversified, will help to divert your thoughts, and remove the object from him who is the cause of your unhappiness.

I am glad you like Saphira. Indeed she is a worthy girl, notwithstanding all her follies.

We have got an addition to our party, a friend of my brother's. Your
cousin

cousin is violently taken with him; and, *entre-nous*, if she is not narrowly watched some consequences may ensue. The Colonel omits no opportunity to ingratiate himself in her favour; but, I believe, he is influenced by *interest*, not *affection*; for I am told his fortune, which was very considerable, is now much impaired. He appears to be quite the libertine, and such a one can be capable of no serious attachment, I am sure.

Constantia is mostly with me. George has made her an offer of his heart, and she is not possessed of dissimulation sufficient to disguise her sentiments; her every action speaks her joy.

I must

I must not omit giving you an account of an accident that befell me the other night. We were invited by Mrs. Arundel to a ball, at her house. The evening passed pleasantly. Just after supper she begged me to go with her to her bed-chamber, as she had somewhat to communicate which required my private ear. I readily assented, and we had scarcely entered the room when Capt. Shallow rapped at the door, but was refused admittance. He, however, by intreaty, prevailed on her to suffer him to come in. He began making some awkward apology for the intrusion, when Mrs. Arundel's servant came and wanted to speak with her. She went out of the room, I rose instantly
to

to follow her, when the impertinent blockhead barred my passage, fastened the door, and fell upon his knees, swearing how much he adored me. I was shocked to the utmost extremity at his audacity, and insisted he should let me go; which he positively refused. I endeavoured again to get to the door, when he caught me in his arms, and threw me on the bed. I gave a violent shriek, so loud, indeed, that Sir Charles, who fortunately for me was in the garden, just under the window, heard my voice, and called to know the matter. I redoubled my cries on hearing him. He flew up stairs, and in an instant burst open the door. The Captain drew his sword, and with an oath, said,

said, " he had no right to enter the
" apartment, or meddle in what did
" not concern him." Sir Charles was
in a violent rage, but prudently fore-
bore taking notice of the pretended
bravery of Shallow, and ran to my
assistance, for I was fainting. Mrs.
Arundel seemed greatly concerned, and
highly incensed at the Captain, who
had the impudence to swear, I was with
him by my own consent. Sir Charles
told him, he was an arrogant, lying
villain, and was it not for degrading
himself to too great a degree, he would
cane him. " But depend upon it,"
continued he, " this glorious action
" of yours shall be made public."
Hogarth himself could not have drawn
a figure

a figure to do justice to that of the wretch: the ridiculous appearance he made, no pencil can paint, no pen can describe.

I went home immediately, accompanied by Sir Charles. My brother insisted upon fighting the Captain, and dragged him out by the collar; when this brave soldier refused to encounter him, and meanly submitted to ask his pardon for the insult offered me. I have been, and still am much indisposed, owing to my alarm. Sir Charles is with me daily, and by the most respectful assiduities, renders himself worthy my friendship. You say I love him: you are such an adept in that passion

sion that you can easily discover it in your friend, but can you wonder at it, exposed as I am constantly to his merit? Yet, dear Georgina, should I not be to blame to indulge this rising affection? I am indifferent to him, no doubt, nor can I cherish the daring hope that I shall ever be otherwise. Unlucky chance, to throw him in my way! I feel I must be wretched—But I will chase these gloomy reflections. Constan-
tia enters, and desires me to give her love to you. Adieu. Let me hear from you, and receive some account of your health.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

SAPHIRA TO HARRIET.

WELL, my dear Harriet, this terrible demi-rape (for according to your own account it was no more) has diverted me to the greatest degree. Why this Captain Shallow, I find, has nothing but his red coat to render him in the least formidable. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot refrain from laughing, when I consider the ridiculous appearance this modern man of honour must have made when Sir Charles entered the room, who, for his conduct in the affair, is entitled to all your esteem, and esteem,
between

between the sexes is, you know, sister to love.

Cleander was with me when Georgina brought me your letter to her. He gave the fellow a hearty curse for his awkwardness, and swore, had *he* been in his place, Sir Charles should have received you at second-hand. Georgina looked very grave, and retorted the speech rather too satirically; however, as I do not love to enter into the disputes of others, I left them, while I went to attend a summons from my mother, who had just received a letter from Mr. Harper. She gave it me to read, and I really was rude enough to ridicule it. She was angry; but, my dear Harriet,

riety, had you seen the formality with which it was ended, you could not blame me. He concluded with, "Dear Madam, be assured I will perform with the greatest exactitude the necessities requisite in a son-in-law." My mother said, she thought herself happy, that a man of his good sense should solicit my hand, and "I desire," added she, "that you will think seriously on the affair. It is high time you were taken from a parcel of butterflies, who buzz and buzz about you, and notwithstanding their seeming insignificance, may leave a stain on your character. I expect your answer, Saphira, and hope it will be such a one as I wish to receive."

How

How unreasonable ! to suppose I would sacrifice myself to such an animal as this Harper ! He is neither agreeable in his person or manner. He may have virtues, perhaps, but I am sure they are not of a nature to inspire affection. His soul is not formed for love, or capable of communicating it. He affects to ridicule the softer arts of pleasing, and all the trembling affiduities of a man of feeling. Rank and refinement are so far from exciting respect in his mind, that he flies from them like a contagion ; nay, he despises what any one else, that has the least taste, would call politeness, and I verily believe the creature could not distinguish the most accomplished woman of

fashion, from the untaught rustic who has never been within a hundred miles of London.

Yes, yes, mama, I shall give you an answer, to be sure; and if you are civil enough to attempt forcing my inclinations, why—I shall know how to defend my natural liberty. This, you know, Harriet, is an age wherein liberty flourishes, and, in order to prove myself *a true-born Briton*, I am resolved to maintain mine: no dead-warrant from Doctors Commons shall infringe it.

The valiant Captain, I suppose, will now be obliged to quit the country. It is

is but just, indeed, that he should *re-treat*, for I think he *advanced* a little too far. I happened to mention him to Miss Effex as a lover of yours, and she told me her brother knew him. Being desirous of hearing his character, I made some enquiries. He told me, he was a may-game for all the officers, and that they were continually playing him some trick or other; among the rest, when he was upon duty at the Horse Guards, a set of them formed a scheme that could not fail of success, since they dealt with one whose vanity far exceeded his understanding.

They wrote him a letter as from a lady possessed of a large fortune at her

own disposal; the chief purport of which was, to make him an offer of her hand and heart, appointed an interview, and desired an answer. The Captain, big with the thought of having made such a desirable conquest, and dying with curiosity to see the fair-one, whose heart his charms had captivated, sent one. The lady, however, was not punctual, but wrote an apology, and named another time. I had forgot to tell you, that they generally contrived to appoint that day for the meeting on which he was to be upon guard. This embarrassed him not a little, as he was continually obliged to trouble some other officer to do his duty for him. A correspondence continued for some time. The
lady

lady repeatedly appointing interviews, and as often finding some plausible pretext for her seeming neglect. At last, he received a letter wherein she told him, that, if he would be ready with a post-chaise such a morning, naming the hour, he might be assured of her punctuality, and she meant then to make him master of her person and fortune. The fool swallowed the bait. Again, unfortunately, it was his turn to be upon duty, and again he had recourse to his usual stratagem, but without the accustomed success. One had a prior engagement; another was ill; in short, they all found some excuse. Poor Shallow was almost mad; he trotted backwards and forwards the room at the

rate of fifteen miles an hour. This they enjoyed no doubt. At last he said, he had business of such an important nature to require his attendance, that he would go to the general officer, and beg of him to excuse his absence. His agitation raised a spark of compassion in one whose breast was less obdurate than the rest, and he told him, he would supply his place. This consoled the dupe: they, however, insisted that he should breakfast with them, to which he agreed, as the time appointed was after that hour. The next morning they were all assembled, impatiently expecting Captain Shallow; when behold, open flew the door, and in he bounced, booted—

booted—and drest for conquest. Seeing something against the wainscot, his eyes were naturally drawn to it; but who can describe his countenance, when upon a nearer view, he saw those dear pathetic letters, which had cost him so much time and pains to write, now pasted round the wall for ridicule! His every sense was chilled with amazement; confusion, and disappointment were pictured on his countenance. A peal of laughter, from all present, rung the room. He, as one may suppose, was in a dreadful rage to find himself the cause of it, and was for revenging the insult with his sword: they, however, soon pacified him on that score; but his mortifica-

tion was so great, that for a long time he was ashamed to appear in public.

Lét me hear from you soon.

Adieu.

SAPHIRA AIRY.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

GEORGINA TO HARRIET.

PAIN and pleasure, though they spring from very different causes, have on me the same effect, and it is some time before I can recover from either: your letter, my dear Harriet, caused a degree of both. I was happy to hear from you, but much concerned at the account you sent. Your character of Shallow has confirmed the opinion I before entertained of him. His audacity can be only equalled by those who, like him, borrow their notions of woman from the seminaries of

vice they most frequent. Their ideas, like the colour of their regimentals, are all alike. Our sex in general (for they make no distinction) they view in the same light, as those unhappy ones who have been trained to infamy by their base seducing arts.

I called upon Saphira, and shewed her your letter. Cleander came in, and, contrary to my desire, she read to him that part of it, where the Captain is mentioned. He expressed his sentiments rather indelicately, and with a loud laugh, swore he was an awkward puppy. I remonstrated, that, whatever his thoughts might be, it was necessary to preserve at least some degree of

of

of decorum in delivering them ; “ But,” I added, “ I suppose, Sir, you have “ forgot the company you are in ?”

We commenced an argument, Saphira left us, and as I found him in every respect a composition of vulgarity and libertinism, I quitted the room, and left him to entertain himself in soliloquy.

I am alarmed for my cousin, and with some means could be thought on to save her from the rock on which I fear she will be wrecked ; the Colonel will certainly take advantage of her weakness. As his fortune is so much impaired, hers will be a desirable acquisition. Indeed, I am sorry for her.

Sir Charles is so amiable, that it is impossible for any one to censure your affection for him. I ardently wish you may meet with a sincere return, and may the fleeting hours of *your* life, be uninterrupted by those painful ones that have clouded *mine*. To be unhappy, and to be made so by those one loves, is a species of misery not to be comprehended, but by those who have had the sad experience. Those only then, can have a just idea of what I have suffered, who have had the fatal cause for similar sensations. They who have never felt the misery of being betrayed by those they loved, can have but a faint idea of the sorrows which I feel. In other misfortunes, some circumstance or other will

will afford a degree of consolation: to that we fly, and are relieved: but what resource remains to her, who, having fixed all her hopes of happiness on one object, sees herself at once neglected by, and deprived of him, and forced to accuse with her tears the very hand she would have chosen to wipe them off, had they flowed from any other cause?

Saphira, no doubt, informed you what happened at Ranelagh. I will then spare my pen the unpleasant task, and only tell you that I saw my still dear, still loved, Henry! He saw me too; his eyes met mine, and I drank yet deeper of the deluding poison. Oh, Harriet, what schemes of bliss has my

my pleased imagination formed when I thought myself secure in Henry's love! *Present* happiness is ever busy to suggest *future*.

Mistaken notion! since permanent happiness will ever elude the grasp of mortals. Love, that has been my bane, still hovers round my panting heart, and melts my soul: it is impossible that an affection like mine should end but with life. Time, which to others is an alleviation to grief, but adds to that which I endure. There is an aching void in my solitary breast that can never know a gleam of happiness more. Nay, do not chide me, Harriet, my own scrutinizing reflections

tions sufficiently point out my folly, and nothing, sure, is so humiliating as that distress which results from our own indiscretions.

I feel my folly with the utmost keenness, but have not fortitude to suppress it—I am more than ever wretched. To-morrow I am destined to leave this place, and with it all my soul holds dear. Oh, Harriet, I shall never see again the dear object of my most tender regard!—Good heavens! do I survive the thought?

I must lay down my pen, my tears will force their passage. Flow on, ye
mournful

mournful tricklers, chase one another
still, your tributary drops belong to
woes like mine.

Adieu, my dear friend. When next
I write it will be from Calais.

GEORGINA MELVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

HARRIET TO SAPHIRA.

INtolerable! Really, Saphira, I can scarcely forgive it. What, make my letter a subject of ridicule for your libertine companion? Could you find nothing else to entertain him with? And could you suffer his audacious remarks, without checking such impertinence with a reprimand sufficiently severe, to prevent a repetition of it? Amazing! I wonder at your conduct. But I will not attempt to enter again on so worn-out a subject; time and reason will, certainly, get the better of faults that proceed not from a bad heart, therefore I
am

am inclined to think your follies will subside: ere long, I think you must view this improper acquaintance in its true light.

Your mother's opinion and mine agree in thinking your situation at present rather critical; but her insisting on your receiving Mr. Harper's addresses is a circumstance that gives me infinite pain; for you can certainly have no prospect of felicity with one whose disposition so widely differs from your own: however, let me advise you to act prudently. Enforce your reasons for not accepting his offer, with that good sense you are mistress of; be cautious how you give pain to a parent, who

who has ever been kind, affectionate, and indulgent; and consider, it is her anxious care for your happiness alone, that induces her to be thus pressing.

We have lost Capt. Shallow (if it can be called a loss) and his place is supplied by a gay young Nobleman, lately come from Southampton, and is to stay a week or ten days with Mrs. Arundel, who is a distant relation of his. Don't be alarmed, Saphira, when I tell you his name is—Lord Courtly. Your *presentiment* was a just one; but, I assure you, no art was put in practice to draw him hither, nor will any, I fancy, be made use of to continue him with us; at least, I'll answer for myself;

self: and though it is very difficult, nay, almost an impossibility, to do so for another, yet, I think, I may venture to quiet your fears, if any should arise, relative to his being taken from you; for the ladies hereabout seem so much engaged, that even Lord Courtly, decked as he is with every ornament requisite to make an accomplished fine gentleman, passes unnoticed. This you will, perhaps, attribute to our want of taste, *tant mieux pour vous, ma chère*; for, notwithstanding your potent charms, it is not impossible for another to supplant you. Mankind, you know, are ever prone to change and inconstancy. The dear joy of novelty, is the darling of that capricious sex: every new face
attracts

attracts with some new charm, which is sure to erase the impression the last has made. It is my opinion, nay, I am fully persuaded, that any girl, who aims at supplanting another in the affections of any of our *modern men of honour*, provided she is at all agreeable, and has penetration enough to dive into his propensity, may, in a short time, by watching opportunities, render herself perfectly pleasing to him, and at last, when his resolution nods, if she pursues the task, and conveys her discourse in the general accepted vehicle of flattery, beat down the guard the other kept on his heart, and become sole mistress of the field. They boast indeed of constancy; but, alas! they are so changeable,

changeable, that their resolution, like the aspen leaf, shakes with every wind.

Georgina wrote to me last week. By the tenor of her letter I perceive she leaves England with great reluctance. I much fear she will return to it no more. What pity so amiable a girl should fall such a sacrifice! Surely, she deserves a superior fate.

Miss Raymond and Col. Liberal are become quite intimate. Sir Charles has perceived it, and, in a mild, affectionate manner, enumerated to his sister the many disadvantages that may accrue from her seeming attachment to a man who is by no means a proper acquaintance

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ance for her to make choice of. She paid no attention to his care for her, and that very evening was met by him in the garden, *tête à tête*, with her lover. Sir Charles was hurt; however, he passed on without seeming to take notice of them, but immediately went to his mother, informed her of his fears, and, at the same time, entreated her to exert her authority, and prevent any future secret interviews. Blinded by her extreme partiality for her daughter, she was offended at him for harbouring a thought to her disadvantage; and told him she had such an opinion of her discretion, that she was under no apprehensions for her safety. He was silent; but

but I fear Lady Raymond will repent when it is too late.

Adieu, a summons from my aunt obliges me to take leave of my dear Saphira.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

GEORGINA TO HARRIET

Calais.

AS I promised my dear Harriet to be very minute in my descriptions, she will kindly excuse my dwelling upon trifles.

I landed at this place, after being tossed about for fourteen hours. The motion of the vessel was very disagreeable to me, and not being sufficiently strong to support the emotion it caused within me, I fainted several times; however, I am now a little recovered. This

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town is very disagreeable, small and dirty: it gives a foreigner a very bad idea of the cleanliness of the nation. Were I a legislator, it should be my particular care to have all sea-ports well built, well paved, and well lighted. If possible, I would likewise oblige the inhabitants to be very courteous, for the first impression we receive is generally a great bias to our ideas; I therefore can have no very favourable opinion of France. Some officers drank tea with us last night; they were very polite and gay, the general characteristic of this nation. As to their sincerity, not having had occasion to try it, I have no reason to doubt it. To-morrow we depart for Graveline, where we shall

shall make no stay, but to see the convent of Clares, some English Ladies of my acquaintance being there.

Adieu. Dear Harriet, do not expect to hear of me 'till I arrive at Brussels.

GEORGINA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXII.

HARRIET TO SAPHIRA.

CONGRATULATE me, dear Saphira, I am more than happy: no mortal, sure, ever was decreed so blest. Sir Charles, that mirror of perfection, loves me. He has made me an offer of his heart, unworthy as I am of such an inestimable treasure. Will not your sympathising heart glow with rapture, and share the joy I feel at being distinguished by the most worthy of his sex?

I was uncommonly dejected this morning: neither books or pen could divert

my

my g'oomy mind. I took my mandoline, went into the grove, and seated myself in the arbour; but musick had lost it's wonted charms. I threw it aside, and with folded arms sat absorbed in thought, when the rustling of the leaves roused me from my reverie. I looked up, and was agreeably surpris'd with the sight of him on whom, perhaps, my thoughts had been most employed. I started and rose from my seat. My confusion was apparent. He took my hand, and with a look more expressive than can be described, pressed it to his bosom. A silence, far more eloquent than any words, took place for the space of near five minutes. He attempted to speak, but his extreme sensibility

checked his utterance, nor could I articulate a sound. At length he breathed,
“ Lovely Harriet! may I presume to
“ hope you will pardon this intrusion?
“ Upon enquiry for you, your brother
“ informed me, he had seen you pass
“ the parterre, and imagined you was
“ here. Borne on the wings of love, I
“ gladly embraced the opportunity of
“ meeting you alone, to pour out the
“ effusions of my soul, and offer up, at
“ that lovely shrine, a heart that has
“ long since been captivated by your
“ transcendent beauty and merit. Tell
“ me, amiable girl, may I hope I am
“ not disagreeable to you? Nay, why
“ that averted look? Speak, adorable
“ Harriet, pronounce my doom: should
“ you

“ you reject me, I am for ever wretched.”

“ I am fully sensible,” I replied, “ of the honour you confer upon me, and value it as I ought. I esteem you sincerely, Sir Charles, but cannot presume to flatter myself that I have merit enough to inspire that tenderness you express.”

“ Do you then doubt my sincerity?” said he; “ what proof shall I give you of it? your merit has fixed me yours for ever.”

Easily persuaded to what we wish, I credited what he uttered, and walked

with him near two hours in the garden, listening to the divine language that flowed from his persuasive tongue. He is to dine with us, and as the time is near, I am obliged to lay down my pen to dress, but could not forbear writing thus far, to inform you of my happiness.

I am this moment returned from Lady Raymond's. We are all in the utmost confusion; how it will terminate, Heaven knows: at present, I am alarmed beyond expression.

Agreeable to promise, Sir Charles came to dine, his sister excused herself on account of a pain in her head. We waited more than an hour for Colonel

Liberal,

Liberal, sent every where for him, but without success, he was not to be found; George seemed very uneasy, and, indeed, we were all surprised at his absence.

After dinner we ordered the carriage. Sir Charles, Constantia, my brother, and self, went to the cave, in order to drink tea. We there met with your friend Lord Courtly, who did not seem much pleased at the rencontre, as he appeared to be engaged with Sally, the girl who lives there. We rallied him, and he looked rather silly: he, however, drank tea, and then left us. We returned at past eight o'clock: no tidings of the colonel, he was still absent. This caused

various conjectures. We sent to Mrs. Arundel, she had not seen him. Sir Charles and Constantia staid supper, then went home. We remained in suspense. However, in less than half an hour Sir Charles returned, pale, and almost breathless. I was amazed; but, before I could speak, he exclaimed, "Oh, Harriet, my sister is gone! "Where's your brother?" He entered at the instant. "Come with me, dear "George," said the affrighted youth, "assist me in finding a sister, whom, I "fear, is irretrievably ruined." He had time to say no more, but, pressing my hand, bade me adieu, and entreated me to go to his mother; then flew into the chaise, my brother with him, and

away

away they drove. I ran to my aunt, and told her as much as I knew. She agreed that I should go to Lady Raymond. I found her almost distracted. I endeavoured to console her; but what consolation could she receive?—Her daughter was gone. I strove to soothe her grief, but knew not how to cure it. I desired Constantia to tell me what it all meant, though I too plainly guessed. It seems Sir Charles asked his sister to dine with him at our house, to which she agreed. Her mother was engaged to visit a lady in the neighbourhood; and, as soon as she was gone, Miss Raymond sent to beg her brother would excuse her going with him, as she was seized with a head-ach, which company

would most likely increase. He readily granted her request, took Constantia, and left his sister at home. Soon after their departure, she went into the garden, one part of which adjoins to a meadow, that leads to a farm-house. She told her maid, if she did not return in half an hour, to tell Lady Raymond she was with Miss Harriet. The Colonel, however, was waiting at the garden-gate; they traversed the meadow, and in the farm-yard was a chaise ready to receive them, into which they hurried, and drove away. She concealed her face, and being wrapt up, prevented the farmer from knowing her. Without this precaution their flight would undoubtedly have been prevented. Lady

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Raymond

Raymond returned early in the evening, and supposing Miss Raymond to be with her brother, remained quite easy. When they returned she was going to bed. Sir Charles asked how his sister did: the servants were amazed, imagining she was with him. Astonished, and not knowing what to think, he enquir'd for his mother, ran to her, and, trembling, asked for his sister. She replied, "Is she not with you?" His answer was in the negative, and immediately said, "She is certainly gone off with that villain Liberal. I'll pursue them instantly," as the maid said she went down the garden." They went to the farmer's, to know if any one had seen a lady and gentleman, and received

the

the above intelligence. Sir Charles came directly to our house, and is gone the road to Scotland, as it is supposed they took that route. I wish they may overtake them time enough to prevent a marriage; but I almost doubt it, as they were so late.

Adieu. Let me hear from you. I'll let you know how this affair ends as soon as I am able.

HARRIET DENHAM.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Sir CHARLES to Lady RAYMOND.

Madam,

I Should certainly have wrote to you before, but waited to be able to give you some account of my sister. I wish it could be a satisfactory one, as I am but too certain, that what I am about to relate will augment the uneasiness you already suffer. Upon enquiry at the first stage, I was informed that a chaise, with a lady and gentleman in it, answering my description, had stopt to change horses, but that neither of them had got out of it. This same account I received at every place, till we arrived at Alnwick. It was about five o'clock in

the morning. I enquired as I had done before, and the ostler said there was a chaise came in about 11 o'clock, and the people who were in it stayed to sleep there, but he did not know any more. I then asked for the master of the inn; the fellow said he was in bed, and he did not care to awake him. I, however, prevailed on him to overcome his scruples, and, at last, the master appeared. After making an apology for disturbing him, I begged he would inform me whether or not there was a lady and gentleman in his house who answered such descriptions? He replied in the affirmative; and added, that they came last night, and had ordered a chaise to be ready by six in the morning. My extreme agitation almost deprived me
of

of my senses. My friend advised me to act cautiously. I desired to be conducted to the room where they were; and when we got to the door, the landlord spoke, and said the chaise was ready. The Colonel ordered coffee to be brought instantly. Upon hearing his voice, I could no longer contain myself, but, in a peremptory tone, insisted that he should open the door. Charlotte screamed at hearing me, and he refused to comply with my command. We, however, forced the lock, and, judge of my sensations, Madam, by those you must feel.—I saw my sister just rising, and half dressed, with conscious guilt painted on her countenance. The Colonel flew by me: his coward
foul

soul shrunk at sight of him he had so deeply injured. George caught him by the collar to stop him, when he swore he had not been in the room with Miss Raymond, whose situation he seemed not at all concerned about, but wholly busied in striving to get away, and repeatedly called aloud for a post-chaise. I, however, told him he should remain there till I had received due satisfaction for the injury I had sustained; insisting, that he should either meet me, his single arm to mine, or marry my sister immediately. He consented to the latter. I found it was reduced to this alternative, as the situation in which we discovered them, plainly denoted too close

close an intimacy bewixt them.—We
are now on the road home.

I am, Madam,

With the utmost respect,

Your Dutiful Son,

CHARLES RAYMOND.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

GEORGINA TO HARRIET.

Dear Harriet,

*M*E voici à *Bruxells* ; but, though I have changed my climate, nothing can change my sentiments : not all the joys of novelty, so dearly sought for, can banish from my mind my lovely Henry. However, as it would be ridiculous to entertain you now with my troublesome passion, I shall not mention it again.

I told you in my last that I proposed paying a visit to the convent of Clares.

I did

I did so, and found them as happy as we suppose them miserable. My mother and I were admitted within the inclosure. Neatness and simplicity adorn the house. Each nun has a separate cell, a quiet retirement from the noise and hurry of an unmeaning world. Sure, this is an agreeable life! I am persuaded at least to think so. Content was delineated on their features, each strove who should most oblige us. I was really in love with them, and if I recover propose residing there. From thence we proceeded to Dunkirk, in a miserable vehicle, commonly called a chaise, but more jolting than a stage-waggon in England. The road is, I believe, the worst in Europe; the soil a
composition

composition of sandy clay. I was obliged to walk a great part of the way, not being able to endure the carriage. At length, we arrived at Dunkirk, a very pretty town. We put up at the *Chapeau-rouge*, a very good house; the so much talked of bason is really curious. A bridge that parts it from the haven, by being drawn, lets in a sufficient quantity of water to receive a ship of the heaviest burthen. The storehouses are close to it, so that in less than two hours, the bridge may be drawn, the water rise, the ship enter, receive its necessary requisites, and be again at sea. I think it were a pity so much ingenuity should be rendered useless. The haven is now filling according

according to the articles of peace, but though I am no adept in these matters, yet, I think, it would require but little trouble to reimbank it. From Dunkirk we went to Furnes, a little town, in a barque drawn by horses. I did not like my journey in the least; but a gentleman told me, that, from Bruges to Ghent I should find it very agreeable. This alleviated my distress a little. We landed at Furnes, where our trunks were hoisted into a wheelbarrow, and the carrier in great pomp followed after us through the town, when we got into another barque, not much better than the former. The company diverted me much. It consisted of an old gentleman, his wife, their daughter, her husband,

husband, and a maid. It was eleven o'clock, and we had hardly been seated ten minutes in the cabin, when the maid laid a cloth, and put a loaf and some cheese upon it. My mother and I stared at each other, but we might have spared our eye-sight for what followed. Would you believe it, Harriet, they ate, I do assure you, as much bread as one of our common loaves weigh, with at least six pounds of cheese. It was impossible for my mother to refrain from laughing; and it was with difficulty I maintained my composure. However, we were soon freed from our devouring associates by our arrival at Bruges. We put up at a very good inn, and my mother sent her

her

her compliments to some ladies at the convent of Prince-neuf, by whom we were very politely received, and staid there two days. The place is very disagreeable: the reason of the town being so called is, from a river that runs through it, over which is built ninety nine bridges; I refer you to our guide for the truth of this assertion. After taking a polite leave of the nuns, we departed for Ghent, on board the barque. I never was more agreeably entertained. It is a custom here for people of fashion to go from Bruges to Ghent by water for pleasure. The river is delightful, from each side of which you have an extensive view in-

to the country, but which is rather flat. We had very good company on board. At table were served three courses, seven in each, and most elegantly dressed. At seven we arrived at Ghent, and set up at St. Sebastian's, a house which has more the appearance of a palace than an inn. The town is very large, but very dull; half of it is uninhabited. Charles the fifth said a very good thing when he conquered it: upon viewing it he smartly said, "*Je mettrais Paris dans mon gant.*" But we must suppose Paris to have been very much enlarged since then. We staid all night, and then departed in our carriage to Brussels. And now, I am sure, if my dear

dear Harriet is as much fatigued at her arrival there, as I was, she will require some rest.

Adieu, then, for the present,

GEORGINA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXV.

SAPHIRA to HARRIET.

WELL, Harriet, Arun-Vale is certainly the seat of empire. Why girl, you have had more real adventures in one month there, than we have had of imaginary, at half the tea-tables in London.

So, Colonel Liberal has marched off with Miss Raymond? I am very glad of it; so ought you, for it will furnish matter of conversation amongst the rusticks. Methinks I see the country misses toss their pretty heads, and lifting up their eyes, exclaim at her imprudence,

prudence, at the same time ready to burst with rage, that such a pretty fellow should have eluded their grasp. Cleander protests she is a girl of spirit; and as for the Colonel, he swears he ought to be crowned with laurel.

Really! is it possible? Why surely miracles will never cease. Sir Charles has then, at last, ventured to declare his passion! I dare affirm, he thought it a mighty condescension. Well, much good may do you with such a precise mortal. I hate so much fuss and parade: so sentimental, and afraid to speak! I admire a man who thinks freely, speaks boldly, and loves
K 3 violently.

violently. I should have no patience with one so insipidly moderate as your formal baronet.

O, Harriet, I am tormented beyond measure with that creeping, disagreeable lump of earth, that my mother has prudently fixed upon to take me for better for worse. But I will forbear this hateful subject, to enter on one more pleasing.

I have made a new conquest, girl; ay, and a desirable one too. Now, Harriet, you must not frown; the fellow's no coxcomb, he does not belong to the Macaroni tribe, I assure you. "But how came you acquainted
" with

"with him, Saphira?" I suppose you will ask that question. Patience, child, and I will tell you. At the request of Sophia, I made one in a party for Richmond. The men attended on horseback; a trio of females in the carriage, Miss Essex, Sophy, and myself. Stupid enough. I was quite melancholy, till Dame Fortune (with whom I certainly am a wonderful favourite, if appearances are not fallacious) commiserated my deplorable situation, and sent a killing son of—No, no, my dear, not *Mars*, *Neptune* is his fire. He was riding, and on seeing my sister, came up to the coach. After the usual frivolous compliments, he expressed some amazement at seeing her without my brother.

She told him the gentlemen were gone on, and asked him to follow them. He readily agreed to join the party, but would be introduced by the ladies, and if agreeable would give his horse to the servant, and take a corner in the coach. We consented to the proposal. The conversation was at first engrossed by the three, but, as I hate to be long silent, I soon made one in it, and as soon engaged his whole attention. Surely, there is wonderful magick in the sound of my voice! or does the charm lay in my person? I do not know how it is, but really there is a *je ne sçai quoi* hangs about me, that the male creatures cannot resist.

Our

Our chat was lively and spirited: I found him sensible, chearful, and pleasing—and such a pair of eyes, Harriet!—Positively, far superior to Garrick's—Excepting this advantage, they are the image of each other.

There, now; you have an exact description in a word—You know I love to be succinct.

At last we arrived at our destined place. The rest of our company met us, and we passed the day merrily. The agreeable (to me) stranger found an opportunity to tell me of the conquest my charms had wrought. It seems he was somewhat struck at my appearance

ance at first sight, but when I spoke ! my language was so delighting, that— in short I believe it went through his heart like a cannon-ball, for the wound seems mortal, for it is now more than a month, and he grows worse and worse. Sophia is a warm advocate for him. Indeed, to say the truth, I think him — tolerable, but there is no bearing his fantastic humour, he is quite a monopolist, would have my whole attention fixed solely on him. No favour that I could confer on *himself*, but he would instantly applaud ; and if I only bestow a smile on any other pretty fellow, he considers it as the height of imprudence. How unreasonable ! to deny

deny one a little flirtation! O! I can never submit to such terms. Then he doubts every thing I utter. His manner of expression excites my laughter, and that confirms his unjust suspicions. He protests he loves me with the most sincere affection, and I am inclined at the instant to believe him; but, upon reflection, it appears highly improbable, for I apprehend that, in the object one loves, one must place an implicit confidence. If this argument is allowed of, Capt. Bellmour certainly does not love me; yet, when I consider his goodness of heart, and the candour which influences his every action, I am inclined to believe he is incapable of insincerity.

My

My vanity it is, perhaps, that prompts these ideas—I cannot tell—but thus it is; I assure him of my esteem (I think that is a great concession) he credits the assurance for a moment, when perhaps I smile on, or speak to another: then he raves, and complains of my volatile heart, the cloud of suspicion re-assumes its place, and false surmises follow. Thus we go on eternally jangling. Fine diversion for *me*. One moment he swears he will not be made miserable, nor shall any woman on earth make him her fool, therefore he resolves to see me no more: the next, his resolution falters, he confesses my power, and like Don Felix in the play, finds he cannot

cannot break the chain so easily. So much for my new lover. As for Lord Courtly, I have struck him off my list: I suppose he will next immortalize his fame with some heroick action in the country.

Pray write to me soon, and tell me all about the two run-aways. Adieu!

I charge you, Harriet (I had almost forgot the important request) let me be present when the indissoluble knot is tied, I mean when Sir Charles and you are shackled. I shall not mind the trouble of a country jaunt to see how
you

you both behave. — Have you heard from Georgina yet? — Believe me, with sincerity,

My dear Harriet's

Affectionate Friend,

SAPHIRA AIRY.

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